

VIRGINIA BEACH DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
POTABLE WELL WATER SAFETY TIPS

Drinking water generally comes from one of two sources:

- **Public water supplies** such as public utilities and community water supplies such as those supplying multiple residences and restaurants. Some of the water sources supplying the water come from wells. The VDH Office of Drinking water regulates public water supplies.
- **Private water supplies** such as the private wells regulated by the VDH Office of Environmental Health Services. Some of these private wells are constructed to provide drinking water and some are designed to supply water for irrigation only.

Wells can become contaminated in several ways:

- Damage to well itself or the water distribution system
- Loss of pressure
- Flooding
- Intrusion of contamination into the aquifer

All wells should be considered contaminated until the following determination can be made individually for each well by answering the questions listed below:

1. *Was the well flooded (this would include water reaching the well casing or fully submerging the casing)?*
 2. *Did the water system lose all pressure (go empty) at any time?*
 3. *Did the water get cloudy or discolored at any time?*
- *If the answer to ALL three questions is "No", the system is probably safe, unless there are other circumstances that indicate a risk.*
 - *If the answer to any of the questions is "Yes", the system should be assumed to be contaminated. Precautionary measures such as the use of boiled water or bottled water should be taken until disinfection and sampling process indicates it is safe.*
 - *Instructions on how to disinfect water supplies can be found at this web site:*
<http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/drinkingwater/documents/BoilWaterFAQs.pdf>